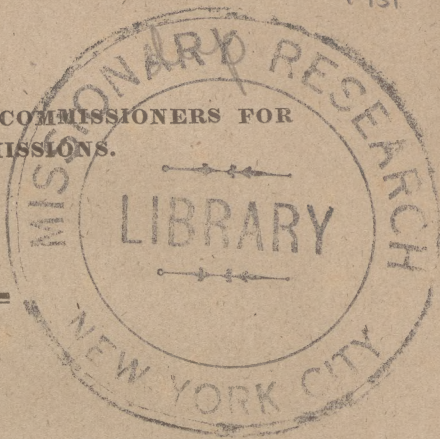


1751  
AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR  
FOREIGN MISSIONS.



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**MISSIONARY PAPER,**

**No. XI.**

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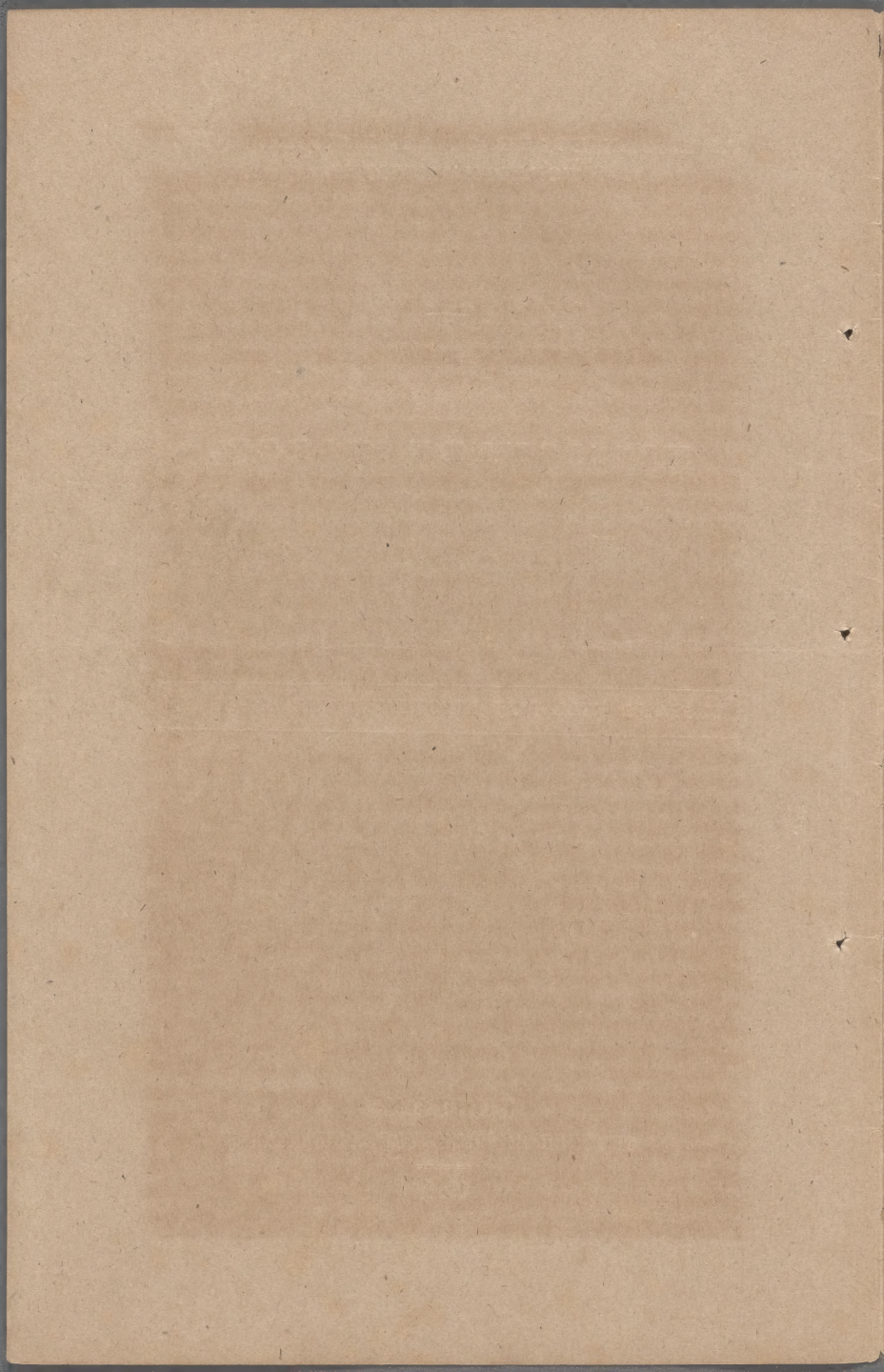
MISSIONS WILL NOT IMPOVERISH THE COUNTRY.

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## MISSIONARY PAPER, NO. XI.

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### MISSIONS WILL NOT IMPOVERISH THE COUNTRY.

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[The first part, by the Rev. D. T. KIMBALL, of Ipswich, Mass.; the second, by the Rev. LYMAN BEECHER, D. D., of Cincinnati, Ohio; The calculations were made in the year 1826.]

*The country has not been impoverished.* The missionary enterprise has been some time in operation. It has received a great degree of public patronage. But who have been thereby impoverished? Have the friends of this object? Need I ask, have its opponents? Does the community, on this account, exhibit signs of poverty and distress? What is annually expended on missions to the heathen, does not exceed a cent a person, for the ten millions of our population: and the contributions to this object come from all parts of the Union. Can an annual contribution amounting only to a cent a person, impoverish this nation? If the whole sum expended by the Board of Foreign Missions, were sustained by the churches alone, I presume it would not amount to twelve cents for an individual. Would such a sum be burdensome to the churches?

*The resources of our country are not easily exhausted.* A full view of them would instantly preclude the thought of their being much reduced by our charities. When I look round on this country; when I consider its extent of territory, fertility of soil, and salubrity of climate—its agricultural improvements—its extensive and lucrative com-

merce—the rapidly increasing growth and prosperity of its manufactures; when I consider the number, intelligence, industry, and enterprise of its husbandmen, mechanics, and merchants, and its favorable situation in respect to almost every kind of business, tending to the increase of wealth when I survey the vast resources of my country; I feel as little apprehension that these resources will be exhausted by its charities to the heathen, as that the waters of the Pacific Ocean will be exhausted by natural exhalation. And I should as soon accuse that ocean of a wanton waste of its waters, for suffering them to ascend for the purpose of falling on the pastures of the wilderness, and clothing them with verdure, as charge the friends of missions with profusion for collecting a portion of the riches of this world, and causing it to descend in the dew of gospel charity on the moral wilderness.

That our charities to the heathen do not tend to impoverish the community, is evident from *those habits of industry and economy which grow out of these charities*. Look at that man who is accustomed to contribute regularly, discreetly, and generously in aid of missions. How cautious is he not to lose any time in negligence, and not to lavish any money in trifles. Why? That he may collect and preserve something for this object. Influenced by that motive, his habits of industry and economy are strengthened and increased, and his property is proportionably multiplied. See hundreds of such instances. See if a considerable portion of the best offerings that come into the treasury of the Lord, do not, as a spring to industrious and virtuous habits, actually increase the property of the benevolent donors. This subject invites examination. On careful investigation it will be found, that there is an increase of industrious, prudent, virtuous habit, resulting from charities to the heathen, which brings more property into the country, than what is expended in those charities. Thus our missions to the heathen *naturally tend to enrich* the community.

That they do not impoverish it, is evident to my mind, when I advert to *the providence of God*. Is not God the author of temporal prosperity? Is it not his blessing which maketh rich? And is not his blessing to be expected in the way of obedience to his commandments? And is it not his command, *Go preach my gospel to every creature?* Is



not aiding foreign missions then, the way to secure that divine blessing, which will prosper the work of our hands? Besides, has not God expressly said, "He that watereth shall be watered himself—There is that giveth, and yet increaseth—Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruit of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses burst out with new wine?"

But, supposing the interest taken in this object should be so increased as to occasion some diminution of our worldly wealth,—is not the object in view, of a magnitude sufficient to justify the sacrifice? Is our wealth to be valued above the salvation of our fellow men?

Are we a people to shrink from an object important in itself, *because it requires sacrifices to carry it into effect?* This suggestion is a libel on the character of *New England*—of *America*—of our *wealthiest citizens*. Propose a plan, which promises great utility in a temporal point of view; and the disposition and the means are always found to carry that plan into execution. How easily are a million of dollars collected to lay the foundation of a single manufacturing establishment. See the waters of Erie and the Hudson united, as it were in the twinkling of an eye, by the efforts of a single state.

It is characteristic of our nation to act with energy, and to bear her part in great designs. And if she were to shrink from the object now presented, *because it requires considerable pecuniary sacrifices*, (an object compared with which the temporal glory of a nation, and of a world, is unworthy to be named,) she would libel her own character, she would tarnish her own glory.

Were all the wealth of our nation sanctified by religion, and the eyes of her population opened on the temporal sufferings and future dangers of the heathen, their voice would be heard from one extremity of the continent to the other; and, borne across the ocean by the winds of heaven, would electrify Europe, would electrify Christendom.—*We will bear our full proportion in supplying the whole heathen world with Bibles and with Christian missionaries.*

Follow me one moment down the path of time.—I find myself between two worlds; that which we now inhabit, and that where sinners redeemed by the grace of the gospel dwell. I look towards this world—and lo! the elements are melting with fervent heat; the earth and all the works

therein are on fire: its palaces, its villages, its cities—all its pleasant and magnificent things, are sinking into ruin. I look to the other world, and there I see redeemed men, rising in knowledge, felicity, and glory, till imagination is lost in the beauty and grandeur of the vision.—With these things in view, hasten, all ye friends of missions, hasten, and rescue from the coming conflagration a portion of the wealth of this world, and with it raise multitudes of perishing heathens to that world of light and glory. With these scenes bursting on my view, could I speak to the whole intelligent universe I would say, and appeal to all its intelligence for the justness of the sentiment,

“A world, in purchase for a *soul*, is gain.”

From the confines of this burning world, look downward with me to that, burning with fiercer, with unextinguishable flames. *Survey lost souls there.* Hear their doleful lamentations. Ah! were those lamentations loud in proportion to their guilt and misery, would they not be heard through the universe, calling upon every rational creature of God to stand in awe of Him, whose authority is sustained by sanctions so tremendous? Here again might the whole intelligent creation be confidently appealed to for the correctness of the sentiment—

“A world, in purchase for a *soul*, is gain.”

Behold a *wonder in heaven*;—a mission fitting out for our world, while in a state of deep and almost entire moral darkness. He, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, comes from heaven to teach us the true religion; and having become incarnate to open the way for our salvation, dies on the cross. In view of a mission sustained by such cost in heaven, (a cost, which, great as it was, did not impoverish that world, but which gave the most striking illustration of the *unsearchable riches of Jehovah's grace*),—in view of a mission thus sustained, shall we grudge a portion of our worldly substance, for the purpose of spreading the religion thus brought to our world? You have pondered, you have felt the argument—*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.* 2 Cor. viii. 9.



Were I to surrender the point which I undertook to maintain, I would still hold on to the object to which we are devoted, with all my heart, and say, Let the community be impoverished; let the wealth of this world go; if on such terms souls may be rescued from degradation, guilt, and death, and raised to that world, where they will be praising God, and advancing toward him by new accessions of glory and felicity forever and ever. But, I do not surrender the point I undertook to maintain. I do not believe that the property of the community has been lessened by the interest in foreign missions, nor that it would be lessened, if the object were to interest our entire population, and the contributions to it were increased a hundred fold.

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It might seem superfluous, that any more should be said on a subject so plain, were it not that persons of intelligence and high standing in society, in different parts of our land, have expressed much solicitude on the subject. Solicitude expressed by such persons, being, as we are bound in charity to believe, not a pretext merely to throw obstacles in our way, but the result of real apprehension, is entitled to respect, and is calculated to have an influence upon the community adverse to the cause of missions. The subject seems to demand, therefore, a thorough investigation: for even the most enthusiastic friends of missions have no design, I am sure, to impoverish the community, by their eager haste to send the gospel abroad. But if we look at the resources of our nation, we must be convinced, I should believe, that considerable more may be expended, than has yet been devoted to the cause of missions, without danger. The extent of our country, pervading so many climes, the richness and variety of its soil, and the unobstructed and highly stimulated enterprise every where let loose upon it, with such increased abbreviations of labor, and facilities of transportation, would seem to bid defiance to poverty in almost any form. Never before, certainly, was so much intelligence, and muscular power so aided by art, applied to purposes of industry upon such a soil, and under such a government, and such institutions, and under such a pressure of motive. The result cannot fail to be

unparalleled prosperity—a surplus product, which cannot fail to produce an unbounded commerce, and ultimately an immense capital. It must be a heavy missionary draft, that shall impoverish such a nation as this!

But if we consider, also, what expense the nation is able to bear, and actually does sustain, we may dismiss our fears of impoverishment by missionary expenditures, at least for many years to come. We expend millions annually for purposes of ambitious ostentation; and millions more for voluptuous living, contaminating health and virtue; and millions more we pay annually as a tax of direct and deep immoralities.

A single horse race, in 1823, is estimated to have cost, in bets and time and attendant expenses, not less than 300,000 dollars—three times the amount of missionary income for any one year; and yet we have not heard the nation groan, and no fears have been expressed, to our knowledge, that we are in any danger of being impoverished by horse races, upon which it may be safely estimated, that at least a million a year is expended.

The expense which is devoted annually for the support of theatrical establishments,—“schools of virtue and good morals” in no respect superior to the bible and the preaching of the gospel,—cannot be less, I should suppose, than two millions of dollars, and yet no fears are expressed that they will impoverish the land.

The expenses of the last war are estimated at more than one hundred millions; and yet the nation has not even halted in the rapid race of prosperity.

About thirty millions of dollars are worse than wasted, annually, for ardent spirits: and though the crime it produces and multiplies does threaten poverty, it is the crime, and not the expense of the material, from which impoverishment is to be apprehended.

From the *expense*, then, which the nation has sustained, and does sustain with increasing prosperity, it is obvious that missionary taxation cannot distress us, unless it shall have risen to some hundreds of millions annually; for impoverishment never begins until superfluity ceases. The great and patriotic men of the present generation, therefore, who have felt solicitude on this subject, may sleep untroubled by dreams, unterrified by visions; for the entire annual amount expended upon missions, compared



with the expenses which we do sustain unimpo-  
verished, is only as the water in the merest rivulet, compared with  
that which all our rivers pour into the ocean. The whole  
annual expense bestowed upon the unevangelized at home  
and abroad, by all denominations of Christians united, does  
not exceed one hundred thousand dollars; and this sum  
is received from the hands of about 300,000 persons, out  
of 12,000,000; amounting to about 33 cents a-piece. These  
of course, if any, must become bankrupts. But what if  
they should? What if they, and their houses, and flocks,  
and wives, and children, should all, like Korah, sink down  
to the centre of the earth? It would not check a moment  
the course of national business; it would scarcely make a  
ripple in the wave of our prosperity; and soon the page of  
history would be the only memorial that such an event had  
happened. But of this 100,000 dollars, not more than  
30,000 are exported from the territories of the United  
States;—about *ten cents* a-piece upon the 300,000 contrib-  
utors. As for the remaining 70,000 dollars expended at  
home, we might as well tremble at the enormous sums ex-  
pended upon agriculture, manufactures and commerce, or  
upon internal improvements, as at missionary expenditures  
laid out in our own land.

Of the 300,000 persons, who contribute for the support  
of missions, three-fourths are children, and females, and  
persons in moderate circumstances, few of whom give more  
than from fifty or sixty cents. Two-thirds of the other  
quarter give not exceeding one dollar annually, which  
would leave about 8,000 persons who give from 10 to 100  
dollars; and a few, 500 dollars. Now the money given by  
children is, generally, only what they save from money  
which would otherwise be expended for toys, or sensual  
gratification, and cannot affect materially the prosperity of  
the nation. Females, and the poor generally, give only  
the results of extra efforts to earn, or of extra economy to  
save, without touching, commonly, either their little capi-  
tal, or their regular income; without retrenching their su-  
perfluities even, and much more without encroachment  
upon their comforts. Multitudes of these are Christians,  
redeemed by the blood of Christ, upon whom the obliga-  
tions of Christian charity are as binding, according to what  
they possess, as upon the rich: and who often, according  
to the extent of their plans and expenses, are as able to

give as the rich are, and would esteem it a calamity and a persecution to be denied the privilege.

With respect to those who give from 5 to 100 dollars, it has been generally supposed, that men who are able to do this, have so acquired the art of taking care of their property, as not to need conservators to prevent their becoming bankrupt by charitable improvidence; and it is not perceived how a community can be impoverished by charity, when none of those who bestow it are, in any degree, straitened by their donations.

Facts, however, are better than speculation. The business of missionary enterprise is of considerable standing; sufficient to produce some of the calamities which are feared, if they are ever to come. It is time, at least, to find some families or some individuals begging bread, who cast their bread upon the waters, confiding in the promise of heaven that it should return, and finding that the promise had failed. I have not yet been able to find a family, or an individual impoverished by charity; and I cannot but believe, if such events had happened, our ears would have been assailed by facts, instead of ominous predictions.

I have a word of consolation for those who are alarmed at our missionary income and expenditures, derived from the manifest fallacy of the theory, that national impoverishment is likely to be the result of the exportation of money. I have known one nation (Spain) impoverished by the importation of money; but the event is yet to come to pass of a nation impoverished by its exportation. Money is the representative of property. And though the art of man cannot make it abundant, where there is no property to be exchanged for it, it is equally impossible to impoverish a nation by its exportation, where industry and enterprise create an abundant surplus for commercial purposes. For as the air will rush in to fill up a vacuum in the atmosphere, so will articles of commerce flow in from one quarter, as fast as it flows out from another; or the exportation will so enhance the value of what remains, that a sum, nominally less, will answer as well the purposes of trade.

We have, therefore, as much cause to be terrified every time a strong north-west wind passes over us, lest all the atmosphere should be blown into the ocean, leaving us nothing to breathe, as we have to fear that our missionary



ships will create, by exportation, a want of the circulating medium.

I think, also, that we may fortify ourselves against the fear of impoverishment by missionary charities, from the fact, that benevolent prodigality has never been the besetting sin of human nature. Multitudinous and grievous are the follies and sins which flesh is heir to, but the lust of squandering money for the redemption of the world, has never, as yet, been recorded among the excesses, against which we have occasion to watch and pray.

It ought, moreover, to be recollected for our comfort, that *impoverishment* has never, as yet, been the bane of nations. They have perished always by plethora, never by depletion. The course of human enterprise, in civilized society, has never failed to produce a corrupting abundance, dangerous to national health and vitality: so that, instead of hermetical sealing to preserve our income within the nation, we need safety valves to let out our superfluous abundance. And national improvements, and missionary efforts to evangelize the world, are the merciful provisions of providence for this end. For if men do not expend their superfluous wealth for purposes of public utility, they will not fail to expend it in ways noxious to themselves, and injurious to the community.

Until now, I have been employed in defending the missionary enterprise from the charge of improvident waste, and a dangerous profusion of the resources of the community; whereas I might justly have occupied the time in disclosing and proving the fact that the entire effect of missionary charities is to promote habits of temperance, industry, economy, and thrift—to give tone to enterprise, and to inspire a more extended, more pure, and a more benign patriotism, than ever cheered and animated before the bosoms of my countrymen. The direct and the powerful effect of foreign missions has been to give estimation and extent to the institutions of religion in our own land—the great fountains of moral illumination, and the springs of national industry and virtue.

The influence of missions upon children is great and good. Their propensities to monopolize, and their habits of self-indulgence, nurtured in childhood, prepare them for those selfish and stubborn collisions of manhood, which

inflammate and agitate communities, and impede with covetous opposition all plans for public usefulness: and not unfrequently the gratifications of the child lead to the inordinate affections and confirmed habits of dissoluteness in the man. But by having their attention turned to the wants and miseries of a world lying in wickedness, and their sympathies excited for poor heathen children bereft of the blessings they enjoy, and subjected to every form of wickedness and wo, their knowledge is extended, their views are rendered more comprehensive, and the selfish, anti-social tendencies of their nature are restrained, and even reversed; while the young immortal is taught to feel another's wo, and to deny himself for the purpose of elevating the condition of man. A generation of children thus educated, would be better fathers and husbands, better members of every local community, better patriots, better Christians.

Those, also, who appreciate the worth of the bible, and the institutions of religion, and feel compassion for the heathen, and give to send to them the glad tidings of great joy, are not the persons who will grudge the pittance required to support the gospel at home—are not the persons who will say to the destitute flesh and blood of their own nation, be warmed and clothed, and refuse to send to them the light of life and the garments of salvation—are not the persons who will violate the Sabbath in the transaction of secular business, or squander for horse-hire and dissipation, every Sabbath day, in the great cities of our land, money enough to enlighten the nation, and save the world. Generally those who contribute to extend the gospel abroad, are the devout and stated worshippers of God at home: and if they are sometimes comparatively poor, they are not the improvidently impoverished and the vicious, but the industrious and thrifty poor. It is that portion of the poor—opposed to missions, opposed to religious institutions, and to their Maker, whose name they profane, whose Sabbath they violate, and whose law they tread under foot—who are improvident, and threaten by their numbers and their crimes to impoverish the land.

Experience evinces that, since the zeal for foreign missions has arisen, the efforts to evangelize our own land have increased a hundred fold. Instead, then, of impoverishing the land by missionary charities, they are the



great and perhaps the only providential means of reconciling our unparalleled prosperity with national purity and immortality. Without the preserving power of religious and moral influence, our rapid increase of wealth will be the occasion of our swift destruction. The rank vegetation of unsanctified enterprise, thrown into our capacious reservoir, will putrify and send moral death up over the land. No nation so short-lived as ours, unless we can balance our prosperity by moral power. Our sun has moved onward from his morning to his meridian with a rapidity and glory which has amazed the world. But unless we can extend the power of religious institutions through the land, dark clouds will soon obscure his glory, and his descent to a night of ages will be more rapid than his rising.

When we were colonies or unallied states, the law could make provision for the creation and application of moral power. The law could compel men to desist from secular employments and vain amusements on the Sabbath day. The law could compel men to support the gospel and attend the public worship of God; and the select-men could see to it that every town should, in due season, settle a minister, and that every family should possess a bible and some orthodox catechism. But these means of moral influence the law can no longer apply; and there is no substitute but voluntary associations for charitable contributions and efforts, patronised by all denominations of Christians, and by all classes of the community who love their country. We may boast of our civil and religious liberty; but it is the fruit of other men's labors into which we have entered, and the effect of institutions whose impulse is felt long after the hands that reared them have mouldered in the grave. It is an impulse, however, that is fast failing, and becoming yearly more and more disproportioned to the mass to be moved by it. These institutions must be extended and their energy increased, or we are undone. They must move onward with our flowing emigration to the Mississippi, must ascend the Rocky Mountains, and pour their waters of life into the ocean beyond; and from the north to the south, like our mighty rivers, must they bear salvation on their waves. In this way the nation can save itself; and unless the nation shall be moved to this work of moral preservation, and open its hand wide, and

apply its mighty energies, it will, like the man among the tombs, become exceeding fierce, so that none can bind it, and will turn its giant hand upon itself, and pour out its life-blood by self-inflicted wounds.

Finally, should there be any lingering remnant of fear in the unbelieving heart of any man, the promises of God demand its instant banishment. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." "He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again." "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself."

These are a small portion only of the promises of God to the same effect. And is he not a God of truth, and is he not able to fulfil his promises? Who holds in his hands the unwasted stores of light, and the fountains of rain, and all the powers of earthly fertility? Who maintains to man the power of intellect to plan, and muscular vigor to execute, and prevents the invasion of disease, and keeps him back from the dominion of presumptuous sins, which would squander property faster than he could earn it? Whose wakeful eye is it that watches over us, and whose mighty hand is it that protects our flocks and herds from pestilence, and blast, and mildew; and holds and modifies the winds, while our commerce moves over the mighty deep? What if it had pleased the Most High to station angels in the sun, to be the almoners of light to surrounding systems; and they, in grave consultation, should conclude to deal it out to the planets in stinted measure, or not at all, lest being exhausted the sun should set in darkness at noon? How would their unbelieving parsimony appear to heaven's bountiful Giver of light? But we stand every one of us surrounded by the munificence of heaven, exhaustless as the sun; and we are its constituted almoners to deal out to those who stand in need, its unwasting stores. And, Oh thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?



